



Sonya G. Smith, Ed.D., J.D. is the Interim Chief of Staff and has strategic and operational responsibility for American Dental Education Association (ADEA) programs. As the Chief of Staff, Dr. Smith functions as the ADEA second in command and acts on behalf of the President/CEO in her absence. She also works collaboratively with the ADEA staff to ensure practices, policies, procedures, and initiatives are in place to support a highly effective organization focused on strategy integration, management, accountability and building a culture, structures, and A+ teams to maximize its mission and serve its 55K stakeholders. Having served as the ADEA Chief Diversity Officer since 2017, Dr. Smith also leads efforts to promote diversity, access, equity, belongingness, and inclusion. These efforts include the development of ADEA's first access, diversity, and inclusion strategic framework, the inaugural faculty diversity toolkit, inaugural dental education-wide climate assessment, and health equity resources to support historically underrepresented and marginalized patients. Dr. Smith also served as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Enrollment Services and Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC). Additionally, she worked at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), previously serving as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/Chief Student Affairs Officer; Associate Professor of Health Services Research Administration in the College of Public Health. Prior to her appointment at UNMC, she served as the Associate to the President; Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs for Diversity at the University of Nebraska Central Administration. Dr. Smith's experiences include serving as a Public Policy Consultant for seven (7) years for the Office of the General Counsel - Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, Tennessee Department of Health - General Counsel's Office, and the TennCare Bureau in the areas of healthcare policy, compliance, health inequities, legislation, and access issues related to underrepresented and vulnerable populations. Dr. Smith has published on women in global health leadership, academic freedom and free speech, diversifying the health professions, legal challenges to campus equal opportunity programs, and reducing health disparities. Her service over the years includes numerous committees such as the National Hispanic Medical Association - Health Scholars Advisory Committee, Social Mission National Advisory Committee, and the National Medical Fellowship - National Advisory Council Primary Care Leadership Program. Additionally, Dr. Smith served two terms as the Vice Chair, Health Law Section, Diversity Committee for the American Bar Association. Her work also includes serving as a co-principal investigator for the national Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP), formerly known as SMDEP. She has been named one of the 2024 100 Top Diversity Officer and a 2022 Influencer by the National Diversity Council. She also received the 2023 ADEA Chief Coaching Champion Award, the 2021 ADEA Change Agent Award, and a 2022 ADEA Chair of the Board Citation for her leadership efforts in diversity and inclusion. Dr. Smith is also the recipient of the Vanderbilt Law School's Bennett Douglas Bell Memorial Prize and Philip G. Davidson III Memorial Award. Dr. Smith holds a B.S. in History, M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction, and an Ed.S. in Administration & Supervision from Middle Tennessee State

University. She received her doctorate in Higher Education Administration and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Vanderbilt University and completed a certificate in international law at the Tulane University Institute of European Legal Studies in Paris, France. Dr. Smith completed her Master of Arts in Global Affairs and Management at the Arizona State University Thunderbird School of Global Management. Her other certifications include: Title IX Hearing Officer, Cornell University Diversity and Inclusion; Civil Rights Investigator, and Affirmative Action Professional.